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REPORT OF THE HELSINKI COMMISSION ON THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION VISIT TO VIENNA, LATVIA, ESTONIA, LITHUANIA, GEORGIA, ARMENIA, AND MOSCOW

(CODEL HOYER)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. OBJECTIVES

The delegation's schedule was composed of six distinct parts. Participants:

- attended the opening plenary of this fall's CSCE Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) negotiations in Vienna, at a time when the Negotiation on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) turns to personnel reductions and attention focuses on the future of the security forum after Helsinki and on the purpose of the Conflict Prevention Center;

- met with the presidents and parliamentary leaders of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania -- the three Baltic States whose long campaign for independence had finally been successful -- to discuss their current situation and entry into the international arena;

- traveled to the Republic of Georgia on a fact-finding mission at the invitation of the Georgian government, and met Georgia's president and his opposition;

- held a brief meeting with the president and leadership of Armenia, on the eve of that republic's referendum on independence;

- met with high-ranking Soviet officials and Russian parliamentarians in the wake of the failed coup and in the midst of ongoing efforts to restructure the Soviet Union after declarations of independence by most republics;

- attended the September 10 opening of the third meeting of the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension (CDH) in Moscow.

In Vienna, the delegation's visit and the Chairman's plenary statement furthered the Commission's goal of maintaining the balance and inter-relation among the baskets of the CSCE, and underscored the Commission's interests in the security arena.

In Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, the delegation gained the Baltic perspective on the implications of the failed coup, learned about their efforts to become integrated into the international diplomatic and economic community, and celebrated with them the restoration of their independent statehood. The visit was the first by a Congressional delegation to the Baltic States since they received diplomatic recognition from Washington.

In the "USSR," delegation members discussed with high-ranking decision-makers in the center and the republics the future of the country after the failed coup. The delegation's itinerary and activities promoted the Commission's goals of maintaining ties with central institutions (if they survive), while consolidating and building contacts with

republics--those intending to remain in whatever becomes of the Union, and those determined to leave it.

II. THE CONTEXT

Vienna

The delegation visited Vienna as the security dimension of CSCE is undergoing an identity crisis. With the Cold War over and the conventional imbalance in Europe now regulated by the CFE treaty, the NATO-Warsaw Pact dynamic has been replaced by a more complex interaction among NATO, the EC/WEU, and the new democracies.

Traditional confidence-building measures seem to have lost relevance as fear of a Soviet attack diminishes. The Yugoslav crisis points up the limitations of a military forum in dealing with the current threats to European security. In response, participating States are considering how to change the Conflict Prevention Center, still taking its first hesitant steps, and how to develop the post-Helsinki security forum, in which all 38 CSCE participating States will be included.

Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania

The delegation arrived in the Baltic States at a time of jubilation: after 50 years of a forced marriage with Soviet communism, the August 1991 coup attempt induced Estonia and Latvia to declare full independence (Lithuania had done so in March 1990), and the failure of the putsch gave these declarations the backing of international recognition. The European Community, a host of other countries all over the world, including the United States, as well as Russia and other Soviet republics, granted official diplomatic recognition to the Baltic States and welcomed their re-entry into the world community as independent sovereign states under international law. On September 6, the Soviet Union recognized the independence of the Baltic States, which were formally admitted to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe on September 10.

The jubilation of the Balts and their supporters is tempered, however, by an awareness of the difficult road ahead. After decades of integration into the Soviet economy, the economic structures of the Baltic States are unbalanced and geared toward Soviet markets, and still dependent on Soviet sources of energy. Building a market economy out of the existing system means major restructuring that will bring in its wake inflation and social hardship for a population accustomed to subsidized basic necessities. Delegation members discussed with Baltic leaders their projects for grappling with these problems, as well as their requests for foreign investment and economic assistance.

At the same time, difficult negotiations are anticipated with whatever remains of the USSR "center," and/or neighboring Soviet republics over matters such as economic

cooperation, a new security system, national minorities, and possibly borders. Baltic leaders provided delegation members with the latest information on the status of these issues and their projections for future developments.

Georgia

From Lithuania, the delegation traveled south to Georgia, in the Transcaucasian area of the USSR. The visit to Georgia continued a Commission tradition of traveling to places outside Moscow on trips to the USSR, but it also set several important precedents. It was the first visit to Georgia by a Helsinki Commission Congressional delegation. It was also the first Commission visit to a non-Baltic republic which has democratically elected a non-communist president and legislature, and formally declared its independence. Finally, it was the first opportunity outside the Baltic States for the Commission to investigate charges of less than democratic practices by a republic that wants international recognition and support for its plans to leave the USSR.

The Georgians demonstrated great eagerness to host the delegation, since they want to develop ties with the United States (they have already appealed to Washington for recognition). They are also well aware of the CSCE and wish to enter the international arena as an independent actor. Consequently, the visit offered an opportunity to learn about: Georgia's plans to become independent and forge ties with international institutions, especially the CSCE; the domestic atmosphere in Georgia, which many troubling press reports have described as "a new, non-communist dictatorship and cult of personality" of President Gamsakhurdia; the human rights and national minority rights situation in a non-communist republic; and, the extent to which Georgia might serve as a model, both positive and negative, for other republics.

Human and national minority rights in Georgia were a central focus of the delegation's attention, which the Georgians expected, and according to their former foreign minister, welcomed: he told a press conference in Moscow in July (while still in office) that the Helsinki Commission would be visiting the republic and would dispel any notions of intolerance by Georgia's government. These remarks are particularly interesting in light of his subsequent remarks about Gamsakhurdia to the delegation in Georgia (see below, p. 30).

Armenia

The delegation's brief trip to Armenia was the Helsinki Commission's first visit to that republic. It took place at a critical moment: shortly before Armenia's September 21 referendum on independence, which was expected to provide the basis for a declaration of independence.

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President Levon Ter-Petrossyan, who hosted the delegation, supplied a readout on the situation in the USSR and Armenia's upcoming referendum. He also discussed the most important issues facing the republic: Armenia's difficult economic straits, the status of the conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, the lasting consequences of the December 1988 earthquake, and Armenia's need for foreign support for its efforts to rebuild its economy and enter the international arena.

Delegation members also met with representatives of opposition political parties, to hear their views on the workings of Armenia's parliament and preparations for the October 16 presidential election.

Moscow

The attempted coup d'etat of August 1991 created a context for the delegation totally different from that anticipated when planning for this trip began. The coup's failure greatly accelerated two historic processes that had been building for years: nationalism and anti-communism. Soviet communism, mortally wounded under Gorbachev's leadership, has now been declared bankrupt by its own former chief, and the Soviet empire is breaking up, as most republics have declared their independence. The delegation thus arrived in Moscow at a truly revolutionary moment in history, when a system forged in 1917 is unraveling before our eyes and a new one, its contours still unclear, emerges from its ruins.

Apart from the sheer drama of the moment, delegation members had the chance to investigate at first hand the events and to meet with the participants. There were innumerable issues to discuss, including: Soviet economic chaos and possible western aid in the creation of a market system, new security arrangements, including the disposition of Soviet nuclear forces, the emergence of new countries out of the USSR's rubble, the future of nationality relations between and within the republics, and U.S. relations with these new countries, and what may be left of the "center."

As a result of the failed coup and the gratitude expressed by Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin and their spokesmen for American condemnation of the putsch and support for democratic forces, the delegation's visit came at a unique historical moment. President Bush said after the coup collapsed that U.S.-Soviet relations should be "better than ever," with the victory of pro-democratic elements. This improvement of relations has implications for all aspects of the relationship, including arms control and, even more important, economic relations and Western aid for the development of a market economy in whatever becomes of the USSR and/or individual republics.

Nevertheless, human rights issues remain a subject of great concern. In May, the USSR Supreme Soviet finally passed a long-awaited law on entry and exit to supplement other legislation on freedom of conscience, the press, public associations, and building a

market economy. The Helsinki Commission, while welcoming these developments, pressed Soviet and Russian officials on key details of these laws, as well as their implementation, and of other legislation relating to the creation of a "law-based state." An important focus of the meetings was the fate of those individuals still prevented from leaving the USSR ("refuseniks"), despite the passage of the entry-exit law.

Yet the entire USSR legislature is in a state of transition. On September 5, the USSR Congress of People's Deputies approved interim arrangements that created a new Soviet legislature in the form of a revamped and more powerful Supreme Soviet composed of a Council of the Republics and a Council of the Union. But all Soviet republics have declared sovereignty and almost all republics have declared independence, so the validity and significance of Soviet laws is no longer clear. Republics themselves may well take over all legislative and administrative aspects of traditional human rights concerns on their territory. For that reason, delegation members placed special emphasis on their meetings with Russian lawmakers.

Other matters the delegation wanted to discuss with Russian leaders included: Western foreign aid to, and investment in, Russia; whether there will be a "center" and what kind of relations it might have with the republics; the negotiations on an economic "common market" among all the Soviet republics (including the Baltic States); Russia's entry onto the world diplomatic stage (particularly, Russia's possible joining the CSCE); progress on a new constitution for Russia, and its human rights laws. Finally, delegation members wanted to hear the views of Russian parliamentarians on the republic's relations, current and projected, with other republics.

The Moscow CDH

The delegation's last activity involved attending the opening of the Third Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension (CDH). This CSCE meeting was historic primarily because of its location in Moscow, for so long the center of a repressive state that violated on a massive scale the human rights of its citizens. The participation of the United States and the other CSCE countries in this meeting signalled recognition by the international community of the liberalization that has taken place since 1985, and, in view of the events of August, relieved celebration at the defeat of the coup plotters.

President Gorbachev attended the opening of the CDH and addressed the delegates. The Foreign Ministers of almost all CSCE participating States were also in Moscow for the opening plenary session, which, in another historic moment, witnessed the formal entry of the newly independent Baltic States into the CSCE.

The delegation was only able to spend the morning of the opening day at the CDH conference center (Hall of Unions), but its attendance at the opening ceremonies and the participation of four members of the Helsinki Commission emphasized the continued

importance that Congress and the Commission place on the CSCE process and, in particular, the implementation of commitments in the area of the human dimension.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The delegation came away from the trip to Vienna, the Baltic States, Georgia, Armenia and Moscow struck by the diversity of the places visited and the corresponding differences between their political problems, priorities and perceptions. If the CSCE states meeting in Vienna are struggling to redefine and restructure their security system to match the new world order which the Balts are in the process of joining, the republics of the former Soviet Union are primarily concerned with gaining recognition as worthy and promising entrants. The dynamics of these interlocking aspects of the process are likely to work themselves out in the context of continuing instability in the "Eurasian land mass" that used to be the USSR.

Having won international recognition of their independence, the Baltic States are now developing the bases and instruments of sovereign statehood, while navigating through difficult economic reform programs. Baltic leaders did not ask delegation members for U.S. financial assistance; rather, they requested expertise of various kinds: technical, managerial, agricultural, legal (to facilitate the process of drafting new constitutions and instituting the rule of law) and military (the latter to aid in upcoming negotiations over the removal of Soviet forces from their territory and future security arrangements with whatever becomes of the USSR). The Baltic States face many daunting problems; the national minority issue is particularly difficult in Latvia and Estonia, which can no longer delay passage of a citizenship law that threatens to antagonize some segments of their society. Nevertheless, the delegation felt that prospects for reasonable resolution of these matters in an atmosphere of stability were, on the whole, favorable. Upon returning home, Chairman Hoyer and Co-Chairman DeConcini supported measures that would accord Most Favored Nation (MFN) status to the Baltic States. The Commission also contacted, and will work closely with, U.S. legal and constitutional experts in order to develop a coordinated approach towards meeting Baltic needs in this area.

By contrast, the delegation found Georgia in turmoil, with its political elite badly divided over the personality and policies of the republic's government. Hopeful of gaining Washington's support for its efforts to become an independent state, Georgia's leadership is concerned about its international reputation, yet seemed embroiled in political, social and personal conflicts that predate the downfall of communist rule and are now feeding upon the very process of gaining international recognition which all the contending parties say is vital. Delegation members left the republic feeling that Georgia's entry into the world community was contingent upon the resolution of fundamental issues, especially the relationship between democracy and order in society. Given the reigning atmosphere of instability in Tbilisi, Members were doubtful about the republic's chances of working through these problems in the short term.

Armenia shares Georgia's priority goal--winning international recognition--but faces different hurdles. If Armenia's domestic leadership is more secure, its geostrategic position necessitates redefining and reworking traditionally troubled relations with neighboring states. The thorny dispute with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh has preoccupied Armenia for several years; if direct negotiations with Baku, through the mediation of other republic leaders, lead to a stable settlement, Armenia could focus attention on other pressing matters. Meanwhile, the delegation's brief visit to Yerevan left members impressed with the quiet determination of the republic's leaders to proceed towards independence through means provided by Soviet legislation, and with their ability to do so. With this in mind, Chairman Hoyer and Co-Chairman DeConcini introduced a joint resolution after returning to Washington supporting Armenian independence.

In Moscow, the delegation gained insights into relations between Russia and the "USSR" and between Russia and the other republics after the defeat of the August coup. Members were struck by how many issues need to be resolved, how few were clear, and how much time might be needed before stable new relationships are in place. As in the Baltic States, the urgent need for assistance, especially economic, was both apparent and sought. In particular, Soviet officials raised the urgent need for medical supplies and hospital equipment. The delegation promised to pursue this issue upon returning to Washington with both the U.S. government and private relief agencies on the basis of a list of medical supplies and equipment to be provided by Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovsky. There was general agreement by the delegation, however, that while urgent humanitarian needs in terms of foodstuffs and medical supplies should be met, any such assistance should be furnished directly to the republics and not to the center. There was also agreement that all financial assistance packages, including credits and direct aid, should be carefully considered and should be approved on a case-by-case basis and be directed to the republics. Members agreed that the best way to meet the very real and immediate problem of ensuring adequate supplies of food and feedgrains was not through grant aid, however, but through the provision of agricultural credits and guarantees, and especially through training, management and technical know-how programs which would address the fundamental problems of efficient production, transportation and distribution.

Senior officials in the Soviet Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Defense discussed their views of the future structure of the state. Minister of Defense Shaposhnikov specifically outlined his concerns about the future role of the military in society, the status of Soviet forces in the republics, and anxieties shared by the West over the control and disposition of Soviet nuclear forces. The delegation promised to follow up on his request for information on the U.S. Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs), laws and regulations dealing with civilian control of the military, and U.S. safeguards to prevent the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. Members were acutely aware, however, that views and projections expressed today about such matters might well have no relevance to a situation that seemed to change daily, as republics debated whether to maintain political/economic links with what emerges from the "center." Russia's rise to the fore

under a democratically elected leadership impressed the delegation as a momentous political development, yet the republic was itself working out a new identity and pondering its relationship to a revamped "center," should one survive, as well as how to construct ties with the other republics. The uncertainty about jurisdiction and authority left members wondering and concerned about who would be responsible for redressing past human rights abuses in the former USSR and who would protect the human rights of citizens of whatever state/states emerge from the Soviet Union.

One thing was certain: Russia, like the other republics, is determined to develop independent relations with the United States. Washington will have to come to terms with the striving of republics for diplomatic recognition and membership in international organizations. However that might affect decisions by policymakers about matters ranging from economic assistance to security arrangements, there will likely be more U.S. Embassies than before. Another certainty is the necessity to ensure the central role of human rights in this process and to insist on strict adherence to the provisions of the Helsinki Accords as the price for recognition and admission to the world community.

Postscript: The delegation left the Soviet Union with the hope that all outstanding refusenik cases would be resolved by the end of the Moscow CDH Meeting. Unfortunately, virtually no action was taken on the representation list which the delegation had handed to Soviet and Russian officials. Most disturbing was the failure of the leadership of the Russian Republic and the Kremlin to address this festering issue and finally to end this longstanding abuse of fundamental human rights.

VISIT TO VIENNA
September 4-5, 1991

I. OBJECTIVES

The delegation's activities in Vienna were intended to reinforce the importance of maintaining balance and linkage among the security, human dimension and other areas of the CSCE; express Commission and Congressional concerns with the development of CSCE institutions; and to further the Commission's interests in the security basket. The delegation informed itself on the progress of the Confidence-and Security-Building Measures (CSBM) negotiations and of the Negotiation on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) through briefings with the United States delegations to these two conferences, as well as attending the CSBM plenary. Commission Chairman Hoyer spoke at the CSBM plenary to express Commission and Congressional viewpoints. The delegation also explored the results of CSCE institutionalization, including a visit to the Conflict Prevention Center (CPC).

II. THE CONTEXT

The delegation visited the Vienna security negotiations as they struggle to define their place in the new Europe and their role in dealing with its threats and crises, even as leftovers from the old agenda remain to be finalized. With the end of the Cold War and the threatening imbalance of conventional forces in Europe now regulated by last year's treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the traditional arms control agenda -- cutting forces and verifying force levels -- is less relevant to the security concerns of European states. Nonetheless, the CFE talks continue on limiting military personnel. The talks are further handicapped by the collapse of their bloc-to-bloc structure after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and by the unwillingness of the European NATO states to act as a bloc. Current uncertainty over the future of Soviet armed forces has added to the confusion.

The measures on which the CSCE Confidence-and Security-Building Measures negotiations have traditionally focused -- prior notification and observation of military activities, limitations on exercise size -- were intended as reassurance against large-scale conventional assaults and are also less relevant to today's security concerns.

With the present reality of both talks uninspiring, attention has turned to their future. The two will be merged into one security forum, part of the CSCE process, after the 1992 Helsinki Follow-up Meeting. Informal discussions on the mandate for the new forum began in Vienna in September. The most popular proposal is for an umbrella forum, under which smaller negotiations could be convened.

Recent internal crises in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia point up the impotence of traditional arms control and military measures to counteract threats to the security of CSCE participating States. In this light, states are taking a second look at the Conflict Prevention Center, established at the Paris CSCE Summit in November 1990, and are considering its expansion. Currently, the CPC deals with implementation of the 1990 CSBM agreement and houses the mechanism for Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, as-yet unused. It also hosts meetings, which any participating State may call, to discuss unusual military activities by another state which pose a security concern. The CPC has hosted two such meetings called due to concern over Yugoslav Army and Air Force activities. Meanwhile, CSCE Senior Officials, including the United States Ambassador to the CSBM and CPC, John J. Maresca, held an emergency meeting in Prague on Yugoslavia on September 3-4 as fighting there worsened dramatically.

III. THE VISIT

Vienna,
September 4, 1991

During its one-day stop in Vienna, delegation members attended the first fall plenary of the CSBM negotiations, where Chairman Hoyer spoke (see Annex A for the statement). Recalling the Commission's long-standing focus on human rights, he reiterated the need for CSCE states to continue to pursue human rights violations until they reached zero, just as arms control negotiators aimed to eliminate classes of weapons or degrees of instability. He urged the negotiators not to shrink from large goals, but to look straight at the issues before them -- the so-far disappointing Conflict Prevention Center and the need to address potent threats to security such as that posed by large-scale conventional arms transfers, as well as the opportunity for new arms control advances as the republics of the Soviet Union disavow offensive and nuclear forces.

The delegation then visited the offices of the Conflict Prevention Center, the CSCE institution set up to assist Foreign Ministers in reducing the risk of conflict in Europe, largely through implementation of agreed CSBMs. Members commented that the Center, at that time not yet fully furnished, had a challenging and important task ahead if it were to grow into an organization truly beneficial to European security.

Before departing, the delegation was also briefed by the United States representatives to the CSBM and CFE negotiations.

Meeting with the CSBM Delegation

The delegation met first with Rudolph Perina, Acting Head of the United States delegation to the CSBM negotiations, the CPC, and the Committee of Senior Officials, as well as with members of his delegation. Noting that the head of delegation, Ambassador John Maresca, was absent attending an emergency meeting of Senior Officials in Prague

to discuss the Yugoslav crisis, Perina presented the results of that meeting: a call for an arms embargo against parties in the Yugoslav conflict, and support for a cease-fire and peace conference convened by the European Community. He also reviewed the recent growth and institutionalization of the CSCE process. In addition to the Conflict Prevention Center, an Office for Free Elections and a small administrative secretariat function with the consultative process of regular meetings of heads of state and government, foreign ministers, and senior officials.

The CSBM negotiations proper were in a lull, as delegations consider what issues should form part of the new security forum to emerge from the 1992 Helsinki Follow-up Meeting. Answering questions from Commissioners, Perina indicated a United States preference for deferring consideration of new departures in CSBMs to the new forum, which will combine CSBMs with CFE and other new ideas which may emerge. Responding to Chairman Hoyer and Co-Chairman DeConcini's pressure on the need for controls of arms transfers and the benefits of negotiating such controls within CSCE, Perina stated that, while the United States did support work on arms transfers, it should take place "not in CSBM, and not now."

Meeting with the CFE Delegation

The delegation also met with the United States Ambassador to the CFE negotiation, Lynn Hansen, and members of his delegation. Hansen stressed the importance of ratifying the existing CFE treaty, which he said established a new set of military relationships in Europe. He noted that the other NATO countries and the new democracies felt the treaty to be strongly in their interest. Since the September 4 interim agreements reached by the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies provide for central control of the armed forces, Hansen believed that the ten Soviet republics which had participated in the "Ten Plus One" process also supported the treaty.

In answer to members' questions, Hansen said that he expected the Soviet government to go slowly on new arms control but to honor its existing commitments. He insisted that a central government would retain control of defense and thus no negotiations with republics would be necessary. National guards which might be created in the republics would not come under treaty limitations, as the treaty exempts forces established for internal security needs. On the Baltic States, he cited the Soviet position that they need not participate as long as the Soviet troops there were subject to the same mechanisms as those within the USSR proper. Chairman Hoyer recalled the expressed willingness of the Baltic governments to negotiate military agreements -- once their independence was established.

Ambassador Hansen assured the delegation that Soviet nuclear failsafes, while not fully understood by the West, were similar to U.S. systems, required several different entities to approve a launch, and continued to be trustworthy.

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He touched briefly on the current CFE-1A negotiations, which are pursuing limits on the personnel levels of the 22 states participating, and indicated that the United States still intended to maintain the 150,000-strong troop level in Europe announced last year.

VISIT TO LATVIA, ESTONIA AND LITHUANIA
September 5-6, 1991

I. OBJECTIVES

The Commission's visit to the Baltic States had three main objectives: to celebrate with the Baltic leaders and peoples the September 2 granting of U.S. diplomatic recognition to all three countries; to show support for Baltic independence from the USSR, which at that time had not yet officially recognized Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania as independent; and to learn what sort of assistance the Baltic States wanted from the United States as they negotiated their exit from the Soviet Union and their entry into the world community.

II. THE CONTEXT

There was a world of difference between the atmospherics during this Commission trip to the Baltic States and the one in February: at that time, with the ascendancy of hardliners in Moscow and the killings of Lithuanian and Latvian civilians in January, prospects for Baltic independence seemed bleak. The apparently unrestrained marauding by Soviet Internal Affairs forces in the Baltic States and their attacks against Baltic customs posts signalled the determination on the part of individuals and institutions in the Soviet center to prevent the Baltic peoples from regaining their independence by a war of attrition, punctuated by outbursts of violence. The Helsinki Commission trip to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in those circumstances was a mission, intended to show American backing for Baltic aspirations, concurrent with the involvement of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf.

The September 1991 Commission trip to the Baltic States was less a mission than a visit. With the failure of the August coup and the recognition of Baltic independence by the European Community and then the United States, their safe exit from the USSR was basically a formality. The Commission's leadership wanted to hear from the Baltic leaders what domestic issues their countries faced--ranging from drafting new constitutions, dealing with minority rights and citizenship, and building a market economy--and matters that now come under the heading of foreign relations: determining the nature of their ties with the USSR and the disposition of its forces and institutions in the Baltic States.

The Commission also wanted to learn what kind of aid the Baltic States hoped to obtain from the United States. Legislation had already been introduced in the U.S. Congress on Most Favored Nation (MFN) status for Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia which would be separate from any such status that might be granted to the Soviet Union. Delegation members wanted to discuss with Baltic leaders more specific needs and requests for technical and humanitarian assistance.

III. THE VISIT

Riga, Latvia
September 5, 1991

The delegation was met at Riga Airport by Janis Krumins, Secretary of the Latvian Supreme Council Commission on Foreign Affairs, and was conveyed directly to the Council of Ministers Building for a meeting with Latvia's government leaders.

Meeting with Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis

Greeted by Prime Minister Godmanis, Chairman Hoyer recalled their February meeting and compared the somber mood at that time with the hopeful mood of the present meeting. Godmanis said that relations between Latvia and "the East" had been "straightened out" and that Latvia looked forward to joining the world community. In this connection, he praised the efforts of Russian President Yeltsin several times. He stated that the most significant issue facing Latvia at the moment was the continuing presence of approximately 200,000 Soviet troops on Latvian soil. The Latvian government was negotiating with the Soviet government, and hopes to achieve a two-stage resolution: restricting the Soviet forces to specific bases and then reducing by stages the number of bases.

In response to a reporter's question concerning relations between the United States and Latvia, Chairman Hoyer noted that strong cultural relations between the U.S. and Latvia had existed for some time. With the advent of independence, he foresaw good long-term economic relations, with MFN "certain to occur very soon," and described the situation in Latvia as "a great opportunity for U.S. business."

Subsequently, Godmanis stated that former Latvian Communist Party Chairman Alfreds Rubiks had been implicated in the preparation of lists of persons to be executed had the August 1991 coup been successful, and that Rubiks was currently being held in Riga's Central Prison. Chairman Hoyer expressed his firm belief that Rubiks, not withstanding his actions during the coup, should be tried with full legal guarantees and in open court.

Lunch with President Gorbunovs and Vice-President Andrejs Krastins

President Anatoly Gorbunovs welcomed the delegation back to Latvia, expressing gratitude to the United States for granting diplomatic recognition to Latvia, and voiced his hope that Latvia would be able to reintegrate itself into both the world economy and the international security system. Chairman Hoyer said that the independence of Latvia was a "great historic day for all those who love freedom" and noted that both President

Gorbunovs and President Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia have pointed to the United States as inspirations in their struggle for freedom. He expressed the conviction that Latvia would soon be both an economic partner with the United States and a full-fledged member of CSCE.

A press conference followed, during which the Chairman and Co-Chairman were queried about U.S. economic aid to Latvia. Mr. Hoyer noted current domestic economic constraints on American possibilities, but said that Congress would help Latvia, for instance, by granting it MFN status, and encouraging private business to focus on Latvia. Co-Chairman DeConcini stated that he had proposed reducing the defense budget by $150,000,000 and providing $50,000,000 in aid to each of the three Baltic States. The delegation then met with President Gorbunovs at the Latvian parliament building for further discussions on economic relations and specific business opportunities before departing for Tallinn.

Tallinn, Estonia
September 5-6, 1991

The delegation was met on arrival in Tallinn by Indrek Toome, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme Council. At Estonia's Supreme Council (Toompea Castle), delegation members met with Marju Lauristin, Deputy Speaker of the Supreme Council.

Lauristin noted several important legislative issues under discussion by the Supreme Council, the most important of which is the law on citizenship. Other pending laws deal with diplomatic relations, property held by the USSR, an independent banking system, Estonian currency, and liquidation of the KGB.

Responding to Chairman Hoyer's request for more information about the new constitution, Lauristin stated that a Constitutional Convention is scheduled for November 15, which will be composed of 60 delegates -- 30 members of the Supreme Council and 30 members of the Estonian Congress (citizens of, or direct descendants of, citizens of the Estonian Republic prior to the Soviet occupation). A referendum on the Constitution is to be held before the end of the year.

Co-Chairman DeConcini asked about the Russian minority in Estonia. Lauristin replied that about 10-12 percent of the Russians in Estonian are eligible for Estonian citizenship by virtue of having been citizens of pre-1940 independent Estonia, or their descendants. The anti-independence Russians, she said, were especially active prior to the coup, but after its failure, they "accepted their fate," and have resigned themselves to an independent Estonia. The pro-Moscow deputies who boycotted the independence vote have resigned from the Communist Party.

Representatives Gilman and Weldon inquired about Soviet troops and naval bases in Estonia. Lauristin stated that the Estonian government wishes first to restrict the troops to their bases, and negotiate their withdrawal. Strategic missiles were withdrawn a year ago, but some cruise missiles remain. Tallinn will demand that the many naval forces be removed, but is not sure Moscow will comply. She suggested that an international conference on Baltic security would be useful.

Lauristin, responding to Representative Sawyer, told the delegation that Estonia's budget actually has a surplus, which will be spent on diplomatic missions. Money will need to be found for restoring and modernizing archives, given the great interest in compensation for nationalized property.

The KGB and its collaborators is an especially difficult issue, said Lauristin, in response to a question by Representative Skaggs. She discussed possible approaches, one of which envisioned giving the names of known KGB informers to the Estonian Supreme Court, and revealing them only if the individual concerned decided to run for elective office or seek a position as a foreign representative.

Representative Slaughter noted that a law on citizenship that was broad-based would stand a better chance of involving non-Estonians in society and addressing their grievances. Lauristin concurred, but said there were forces in Estonia that resisted giving citizenship to so many people who had come to the republic since its occupation under Stalin.

In the evening, Deputy Speaker Lauristin hosted a dinner for the delegation attended by President Ruutel, Mr. Toome and other members of the Supreme Council. The occasion provided delegation members the opportunity to exchange views with their Estonian counterparts.

The next morning, the delegation met with Rein Mullerson, Deputy Foreign Minister. He emphasized the need for foreign business contacts, and pointed out the traditional productivity of Estonian workers. He also sought Western expertise in strategic affairs as a means of dealing with the Soviet military presence in Estonia and explained that there is no Defense Ministry *per se*, but a law on Defense Forces has been adopted. Mullerson felt that it was presently impossible to have all Soviet forces withdrawn. He said the Estonian government had no figures on the number of Soviet military forces in Estonia, and pointed out that Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar had recently made the *first* visit by an Estonian government official to a Soviet military base throughout all the years of Soviet occupation.

As for Estonia's interest in joining international organizations, Mullerson noted his country's applications to the UN and CSCE, and its intention to join the International

Monetary Fund and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. But he noted that Estonia does not have the manpower to join every international organization.

A press conference followed, during which Chairman Hoyer outlined the previous meeting with Deputy Speaker Lauristin, and the Commission's intention to urge that public and private assistance be provided to Estonia. Co-Chairman DeConcini cautioned against high expectations for direct aid, but felt that technical expertise could be provided.

A reporter asked whether Estonia would drop to the bottom of Washington's list of priorities, now that it had achieved independence. Chairman Hoyer disputed that assumption, while noting that aid to the Baltic States would still be a "team effort" in partnership with European countries. Representative Glickman assured the reporters that "the United States will not give up leadership in supporting freedom and democracy," and Representative Myers mentioned funds designated for the Baltic States in the Foreign Assistance Bill. "Don't write us off," concluded Representative Levin.

Questioned on the Helsinki Commission position on the Estonian citizenship law, Chairman Hoyer stated that the Commission would advise the closest adherence to the Helsinki Final Act, and said that "my own view is that citizenship should be as broad as possible -- but we understand the various issues involved."

After a brief tour of Tallinn's Old Town, the delegation departed for Lithuania.

Vilnius, Lithuania
September 6, 1991

The delegation was met on arrival by Supreme Council Deputies Vladimiras Jarmolenko and Mecys Laurinkus, as well as by Rita Dapkus, director of the Information Bureau of the Lithuanian Supreme Council. Also waiting for the delegation were representatives of the Polish faction in the Lithuanian parliament, seeking a meeting with the delegation; a meeting with Helsinki Commission staff was arranged for later that afternoon.

Lunch Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Pakalniskas and other Ministers

The delegation proceeded to a working lunch hosted by Deputy Prime Minister Vytautas Pakalniskas, whose welcoming statement emphasized human rights as the basis of Lithuania's independence. He introduced a number of other members of the Council of Ministers in attendance, most of whom represented the economic and trade sectors. In the course of the buffet lunch, members had an opportunity to meet the representative of various Ministries and acquaint themselves with many issues and problems facing independent Lithuania.

Tour of Former KGB Headquarters in Vilnius

A major highlight of the entire trip followed lunch: the delegation visited the former KGB headquarters in Vilnius, which had been closed and sealed after the August coup. The delegation's tour guide was former political prisoner and member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, Bailys Gajauskas, who had served a total of 37 years in Soviet prisons and internal exile. Mr. Gajauskas is now a deputy in the Lithuanian Supreme Council and head of the commission mandated to liquidate KGB activities in the republic. He showed the delegation the cell where he spent a year in isolation. Chairman Hoyer recalled the activities of the Commission on behalf of Mr. Gajauskas, and in an impromptu ceremony in front of the KGB building, presented Gajauskas with an American flag.

The delegation then drove by the television tower where 13 Lithuanians were killed when the tower was occupied by Soviet Internal Affairs forces in January. During the Commission's February 1991 visit, Soviet forces were still in control of the tower; now, in September, it was back in Lithuanian hands.

Meeting with Polish Deputies

Three members of the Polish faction in Lithuania's Supreme Council met Helsinki Commission staff in the afternoon to put forward their grievances and concerns. They protested the decision by Lithuania's parliament to disband the regional councils in Vilnius and Salcininkai, areas heavily inhabited by Poles. Since 1989, Poles in Lithuania have been campaigning for an autonomous region; in late 1990 and early 1991, Lithuania's parliament made a variety of concessions in cultural matters and a project on the creation of an autonomous region was supposed to be prepared. The Polish deputies complained that the Lithuanians were backtracking on these agreements and asked that the regional soviets--which the Lithuanians have long accused of pro-Soviet sentiments and actions, including support for the August coup--be permitted to elect new leaders.

Meeting and State Dinner with President Vytautas Landsbergis

The delegation visited the Lithuanian Supreme Council building in the late afternoon for a meeting with President Vytautas Landsbergis. Chairman Hoyer recalled the Helsinki Commission's previous visit in February, when the parliament was still under siege following the January bloodshed, and welcomed Lithuania's finally regaining its full freedom and independence with the announcement that very day that President Gorbachev and the Soviet State Council had at last recognized the independent status of the Baltic States. President Landsbergis responded with appreciation for the unstinting support of the U.S. Congress and the Commission during this long and difficult process.

Before adjourning for a press conference, Landsbergis mentioned the issue of this government's exoneration of Lithuanians convicted of Nazi war crimes by Soviet courts after the war, which had been raised the day before by the press. He stated that this rehabilitation process had been misrepresented by the press, and that charges that Lithuania was exonerating any known or actual Nazi collaborators and war criminals were unfair and untrue. Later, both before and during a dinner hosted by Landsbergis for the delegation, Chairman Hoyer, Co-Chairman DeConcini, Representatives Gilman, Glickman, Levin and others expressed their deep concern about any blanket rehabilitation of convicted war criminals which could exonerate even one person guilty of such crimes. Recognizing that many innocent people were convicted by Soviet Kangaroo courts, they nevertheless emphasized the necessity for due process on a case by case basis, and received a commitment from Landsbergis that the perpetrators of genocidal crimes would neither be permitted to go free nor absolved of their guilt. Upon returning to Washington, a follow-up letter reiterating their concerns and signed by all members of the delegation was sent to President Landsbergis.

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VISIT TO GEORGIA
September 7-8, 1991

I. OBJECTIVES

The delegation's visit to Georgia had four main objectives: to meet with Georgia's President, former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia, and members of his government; to meet with spokesmen of the opposition in Georgia, both those represented in the parliament and those who have created an alternative congress; to meet with members of the press to discuss problems they have encountered; and, to travel to Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, where Georgian-Ossetian violence broke out last December, for discussions with leaders of the Georgian and Ossetian local population.

II. THE CONTEXT

After the October 1990 parliamentary elections that ended communist rule in Georgia and brought to power a nationalist government, Georgia, under the leadership of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, declared a transition to independence. Georgia held a referendum in March 1991 and declared independence on April 9. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who had been chairman of the Georgian parliament, was elected president by the deputies on April 9 and on May 26, he became Georgia's first popularly elected president.

Nevertheless, there is vocal domestic opposition to Gamsakhurdia. On September 2, several participants in an anti-Gamsakhurdia demonstration were shot and wounded in Tbilisi; since then, protests and demonstrations for and against the government have became virtually a daily feature of life in Tbilisi. The delegation therefore arrived in Georgia at a moment of serious tension and a certain amount of instability.

The delegation also arrived in the aftermath of a government shakeup: the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (the latter of whom had met in Washington with Co-Chairman DeConcini in June) left President Gamsakhurdia's government on the eve of the August 19 coup attempt in Moscow. Moreover, there were reports that the leader of Georgia's National Guard had recently been dismissed for insubordination to President Gamsakhurdia over differences with Gamsakhurdia on responding to the coup attempt, and that Gamsakhurdia had tried to disband the National Guard.

The republic has undergone an economic crisis, which Georgia's leadership has blamed on an economic blockade by Moscow, and which has lowered living standards. At the same time, domestic politics have continued to betray the divisions that marked the October 1990 parliamentary election campaign and election itself. Opponents of Gamsakhurdia grouped around the "National Congress," an alternative, "unofficial" representative body, continue to reject the legitimacy of the Georgian Supreme Council

and the Gamsakhurdia presidency, arguing that truly democratic elections are impossible in an occupied colony.

Nationality relations in the republic have also long been strained, with non-Georgians fearful that the new leadership would take a "Georgia for the Georgians" approach, and some non-Georgian regions trying to secede from Georgia. Gamsakhurdia's government responded in July to these concerns, which were reported in the Western press, with a draft law on citizenship that essentially represents a "zero-option," by offering citizenship to all permanent residents of the republic at the time the law is adopted. On the other hand, non-Georgians in South Ossetia and Abkhazia reportedly supported the coup, which could not improve their relations with Georgians.

Despite the deteriorating economic situation and growing calls for his resignation, President Gamsakhurdia's popularity among Georgians remains high. He is for many Georgians the foremost symbol of determined anti-communist resistance and defense of Georgian interests. Nevertheless, politics in Georgia have become highly personalized, with Gamsakhurdia assuming the central, not to say, exclusive role. His opponents, both inside and outside Georgia, charge that he has fostered a cult of personality in creating an authoritarian regime that muzzles freedom of the press. Gamsakhurdia has labeled political opponents "traitors" and blames them--along with Kremlin disinformation and subversion--for Georgia's difficulties and reputation as a republic where communist repression has been replaced by a non-communist variety.

Delegation members welcomed the chance to meet the republic president and judge for themselves whether he is a "dictator" or a "democrat under pressure." They wanted to discuss whether, with Moscow's threat to Georgia seemingly reduced after the failure of the coup, Gamsakhurdia's government will feel less constrained to divide society into friends and foes, and more amenable to compromise with the political opposition and with non-Georgians who charge Gamsakhurdia with chauvinism. Delegation members also hoped to ask the political opposition and representatives of national minorities how the defeat of the coup and the apparent breakup of the USSR affects their situation and the prospects of political compromise in a Georgia that might soon be independent.

Finally, the delegation had, in previous contacts with Georgian representatives, planned a trip to Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia. It was to be the first Congressional delegation to the city, the site of bloody conflicts since December 1990. Delegation members wanted to discuss with local residents the future of what used to be called the "South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast" (which Georgia's parliament dissolved in December 1990), the future of cultural autonomy, (which President Gamsakhurdia says he favors), whether there will be a referendum on the status of South Ossetia (as former foreign Minister Koshtaria indicated to Co-Chairman DeConcini) and the prospects of reconciliation between Georgians and Ossetians in that region.

III. THE VISIT

Tbilisi, Georgia
September 7, 1991

The delegation arrived in Tbilisi on September 7. A large group of Georgian officials met the delegation at the airport, including Foreign Minister Murman Omanidze and the Chairman of the Georgian Supreme Council, Akaky Asatiani.

Also waiting for the Members was a contingent of the non-parliamentary opposition, led by Irina Sarishvili of the National Democratic Party, whose purpose was to ensure that the delegation would meet with them. After assuring those opposition activists that such a meeting was already scheduled for that day, and would be confirmed by subsequent phone contact, the delegation repaired to the Metekhi Palace Hotel, where the Georgian side had arranged a working lunch with government ministers.

Working Lunch with Georgian Officials

The working lunch was organized so that delegation members were divided up to sit at different tables with various Georgian government and parliamentary officials. Chairman Hoyer lunched with the Deputy Speaker of the Georgian parliament, and Co-Chairman DeConcini with the Georgian Foreign Minister. Other Georgian officials present included the Ministers of Justice, Education, Trade and Culture. The Minister of Material and Technical Supply and State Resources, Igor Chkheidze, not only attended the lunch but accompanied the delegation during the remainder of the visit.

At the lunch, Foreign Minister Murman Omanidze, who had been a deputy dean at Tbilisi University and a professor of international law, told Co-Chairman DeConcini about the political situation in the republic. He described the National Congress, which boycotted last October's parliamentary election, as "criminal gangs" that break the law, "not an opposition." Omanidze said that delegation members would meet both President Gamsakhurdia and representatives of the opposition and form their own opinion. He asked "where was the opposition during the coup?" The question had particular resonance in light of later developments during the visit and accusations levelled against Gamsakhurdia by the opposition. Omanidze told Co-Chairman DeConcini that Georgia would welcome Helsinki organizations to the republic to investigate charges that Georgia has political prisoners.

On inter-ethnic relations in Georgia, especially the situation in the former South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, Omanidze accused the secessionist South Ossetian leadership of complicity in the August coup attempt. He related that the previous evening, a former member of the South Ossetian group leading the struggle for secession from Georgia--*Adamon Nykhas*--had revealed on Georgian television that the group had disbanded and

its leaders had fled the region, absconding with money contributed by Ossetians to fund the organization's efforts.

On Georgian foreign policy, Omanidze related that Georgian emissaries in Moscow had appealed for recognition of Georgia's independence to representatives of 26 countries. So far, he said, Moldavia and Romania had recognized Georgia as an independent state, and he hoped recognition from other East European countries would soon follow. As for Russia, Omanidze said Georgia had received promises of recognition but that Russian leaders disapproved of some Georgian policies, especially the break with all central Soviet structures.

Meeting with Georgian President Gamsakhurdia

From the hotel, the delegation was transported to the State House for a meeting with President Zviad Gamsakhurdia. The president, who knows English well, spoke Georgian most of the time but occasionally made his points in English.

Gamsakhurdia began by noting that Georgia had been looking forward to the delegation's arrival, as "our independence will be decided now," and international recognition of Georgian independence depends first and foremost on recognition by the United States. He related that the day before, after the USSR State Council had recognized the independence of the Baltic States, the chairman of the Georgian parliament asked about independence for Georgia but received no reply. The Soviet Union, said Gamsakhurdia, "has no will to recognize the independence of Georgia," and has therefore engaged in a campaign of "disinformation and slander as well as provocation" against the republic. It is similar to the campaign launched against the Baltic States before their independence; but whereas there, the center used force, in Georgia, it relies on opposition groups to destabilize the situation.

On September 2, continued Gamsakhurdia, people were shot and injured during a protest demonstration when the opposition tried to block the streets of Tbilisi and a clash ensued. "I am sure that it was an action planned against the republic," said Gamsakhurdia, that was timed to coincide with the visit of the delegation led by Representative Gibbons, and aimed at undermining Georgian--U.S. relations to hinder U.S. recognition of Georgian independence by the United States. Gamsakhurdia said that some members of Georgia's militia "serve enemies of Georgia. We shall punish all the guilty after an investigation."

The president claimed there is also an attempt to spread disinformation about the situation in South Ossetia. He said that it was up to delegation members to form their own image of the situation there.

Chairman Hoyer and Co-Chairman DeConcini noted American support for self-determination. Asked about reports of human rights violations in Georgia and restrictions

on information, Gamsakhurdia replied that there are no political prisoners in Georgia; "they are criminals--not political prisoners." In Georgia, he said, the opposition is armed and unarmed; the former has, in some cases, been arrested. As for allegations of restrictions on information, he said there are many opposition publications, some of which "criticize our parliament and president, and slander [them] as well."

Representative Gilman asked about U.S.-Georgian ties. Gamsakhurdia said Georgia was ready for future cooperation with the United States and added that Georgia's Prime Minister would meet with Secretary Baker the day after next. He assured Representative Myers that a recently adopted law protects foreign investments and free enterprise.

Responding to Representative Glickman's comment that U.S. support of Georgian independence would be based on "how you treat your citizens," Gamsakhurdia said charges that he had created a cult of personality and a dictatorship are "false charges against me by my enemies." The media are free, he said, as are political parties. "There is free speech and freedom to express thoughts. The only thing we try to maintain is order in the streets. Our enemies say order is suppression of democracy and human rights." Gamsakhurdia asked delegation members to verify all information they receive, and invited the delegation to "send your representatives to Georgia, and they should stay for a long period" to get the complete picture. He assured Representative Jones that trials of people arrested for trying to overthrow the government would be open to anyone wanting to attend. He said he would try to facilitate the Congressman's request to visit prisoners.

Gamsakhurdia explained to Representative Levin that Georgia--the key to the Caucasus--is strategically more important than the Baltic States to the USSR, which therefore wanted to prevent Georgian independence. Gamsakhurdia also told Representative Slaughter that reports she had read about a centrally-orchestrated blockade of Georgia are true. The blockade began when Georgia declared independence, though it had lessened since the coup.

Asked by Representative Sawyer what had happened in Georgia during the coup, Gamsakhurdia said he had expressed his opinion that Gorbachev might have staged the coup to strengthen his position. "President Bush criticized my statement. But the news media is behind me." He said "we were against the coup--our opposition was for it. On the very first day, I addressed the West and asked them to defend us and Yeltsin."

Representative Skaggs asked why Eduard Shevardnadze has been complaining about the Georgian government. Gamsakhurdia said Shevardnadze has done much to improve East-West relations but he has a reactionary attitude toward internal politics. He is responsible for the armed dissidents in Georgia and other opposition. He is "guiding all that happens against the Georgian people."

On military matters, Gamsakhurdia requested that the United States insist on the removal of all Soviet nuclear weapons and chemical weapons from Georgia, which threaten the entire republic. He also said that Georgia's leadership does not know how many Soviet troops are stationed on Georgian territory, adding that Georgia would not sign a military treaty with the Soviet Union.

Representative Laughlin asked who gave the orders for civil disobedience in Georgia and who controls the Georgian KGB. Gamsakhurdia responded that "Moscow is responsible because we are fighting for freedom." As for the KGB, he said it is under Georgian control, though some people from the past still remain in the organization.

Meeting with the Parliamentary Opposition

After the discussion with Gamsakhurdia, delegation members held a meeting with representatives of the parliamentary opposition which the Georgian side had arranged at the Commission's request. Members of several opposition parties had recently formed an opposition bloc, the "Democratic Center," in Georgia's 250-seat legislature. Present at the meeting were Nodar Natadze, Chairman of the Georgian Popular Front, and representatives of other parties.

Having a good command of English, Mr. Natadze did much of the talking for the parliamentarians. He complained about human rights abuses, the excessive powers of the presidency, for example, the right to dissolve parliament, to appoint prefects (local officials) with virtually unlimited powers, and to appoint university rectors or National Guard commanders. Natadze argued that Georgia needed not a strong executive presidency, but a strong parliament. He said the Georgians had not yet learned to distinguish among anti-communist politicians, which consequently created a false polarity between communists and Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

He added that Georgians feared a communist return to power, and with reason: as long as the Soviet army was still stationed in Georgia and the Soviet government had not recognized Georgia's independence, the threat of Soviet action remained.

Natadze also charged the Gamsakhurdia administration with failing to undo the socialist mechanisms of running the economy. The law on freedom of enterprise had been only recently passed, he said, and state and collective farms continued to dominate Georgia's agricultural economy.

Meeting with the Non-Parliamentary Opposition

The Georgian side had also organized a meeting with spokespersons of the non-parliamentary opposition, the National Congress. Interestingly, however, the list of participants provided to the delegation did not include anyone from the National

Democratic Party or the National Independence Party, the two parties that had won the most votes in the election to the National Congress. Nevertheless, members of both these parties managed to attend the meeting.

Co-Chairman DeConcini chaired the U.S. side at this discussion, which began before the earlier meeting with the parliamentary opposition concluded. Also attending were Representatives Gilman, Glickman, Myers, Sawyer and Skaggs. Asked to describe violations of human rights taking place in Georgia, members of the non-parliamentary opposition began with restrictions on freedom of information: specifically the lack of objective information, limited information made available to the public by Georgia's state-run media, and disinformation.

As an instance of the latter, they referred to official Georgian statements that demonstrators on September 2 had used firearms, forcing Georgian militiamen to shoot back. A cameraman who was filming the meeting with the delegation then described how his video of the September 2 violence was prevented from being aired on Georgian television--after agreement to show the film had been reached with the television studio management--by the shutdown of television in the republic. Yet later that night, President Gamsakhurdia appeared on television, claiming that armed demonstrators had opened fire at the militia and wounded several militiamen and bystanders.

Opposition spokespersons claimed that the opposition may not own media outlets and are barred from Georgian state-run television and radio. As an example, they cited the campaign for the May 26, 1991 presidential election, in which Gamsakhurdia's rivals were subjected to smear campaigns in the media, to which they could not themselves gain access. In fact, they asserted that Gamsakhurdia's victory and particularly his large margin of victory were due to vote-rigging and intimidation, despite the presence in Georgia of international observers.

Asked by Representative Glickman about repression of democratic norms, a representative of the National Democratic Party charged that telephones were bugged, newspapers that publish articles against Gamsakhurdia were closed down, people were fired for their political beliefs, and that Georgia has 76 political prisoners. In such circumstances, she said, the chances of Western recognition of Georgian independence were nil.

Opposition spokespeople explained that their goal was Gamsakhurdia's resignation. They claimed their September 2 demonstration was broken up by force because they had intended to publicize evidence of links between Gamsakhurdia and the coup plotters in Moscow. Former Prime Minister Sigua and former Foreign Minister Koshtaria had documentary proof of this allegation, they said, and asked the U.S. delegation to meet with them. Co-Chairman DeConcini agreed to do so.

During these meetings, Commission staff tried to arrange a delegation trip for the next day to Tskhinvali, the capital of the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, which had been agreed with the Georgian side in advance. The trip, however, turned out to be too difficult to organize: not only were logistics--a two-hour bus ride or a risky helicopter flight on which not all delegation members could be transported--problematic, but Georgian interlocutors stressed that the danger was real. Soviet army forces, they explained, were in nominal control of the region, but, in fact, local armed guerillas were in charge and several people had been killed a few days before in the continuing violence.

State Dinner

At the state dinner held that evening in honor of the delegation, President Gamsakhurdia voiced the hope that the delegation's short visit would help lead to eventual U.S. recognition of Georgia's independence, and he made clear his willingness to do everything possible to promote this outcome. Gamsakhurdia said that Georgians had always nurtured strong feelings of affection for America; if they are disappointed, he said, it would be "destructive for our relations."

Meeting with Tskhinvali's Police Chief

Gamsakhurdia had arranged for the police chief of Tskhinvali, Valeri Gasaev, who had appeared the previous evening on Georgian television, to come to Tbilisi and speak to the delegation. He arrived during dinner, and Chairman Hoyer left the dining room for a conversation with him, at which Georgian Interior Minister Khabuliani and Foreign Minister Omanidze were also present. Gasaev, himself an Ossetian, explained that, as in the past, the Bolsheviks were provoking inter-ethnic conflicts between Georgians and Ossetians. He dismissed the possibility that 68,000 Ossetians in South Ossetia could constitute a state entity and argued that no one, including Russia--itself composed of autonomous republics and regions--wanted to see border changes in Georgia.

As for the current situation in South Ossetia, Gasaev said that the region was controlled by armed guerilla bands, as the Soviet troops stationed there were essentially neutral and indifferent to the violence, kidnappings and criminality all around them. *Adamon Nykhas*, the South Ossetian Popular Front that had led the region's movement for secession from Georgia, according to Gasaev, was disbanded, its leaders gone (to Moscow and, reportedly, to Switzerland), with funds stolen from the movement's accounts. The local Communist Party and government leaders, he said, had supported the August coup. With the failure of the putsch, secessionist forces in South Ossetia were now deprived of a patron in the center. But Gasaev voiced confidence that no massacre of Ossetians would take place, as Georgia's leaders were well aware that international public opinion was critical for Georgia's hopes of gaining recognition as an independent state.

Asked about the prospects that Abkhazia and Adjaria would retain their autonomy, Omanidze said that Georgia's authorities would not abolish their autonomous status and institutions, but it was possible, he added, that "they might dissolve themselves."

Meeting with Gia Chanturia of the National Democratic Party

The next morning, September 8, after talking to demonstrators on Rustaveli Boulevard, some delegation members, including Chairman Hoyer, held an unscheduled meeting with Gia Chanturia. Chairman of the National Democratic Party (NDP), Chanturia is a leader of the National Congress and a fervent opponent of President Gamsakhurdia.

Chanturia said that Gamsakhurdia is at heart a Bolshevik and accused him of involvement in the August coup. However, Georgia wants recognition from the United States even if Gamsakhurdia is still in office because he is an internal problem for Georgians. "Political leaders come and go but Georgia remains," said Chanturia.

Asked by Representative Levin why Gamsakhurdia received 80-90 percent of the vote if he was such a despot, Chanturia replied that Hitler, too, was elected, and just because elections are held does not mean that they are free. He noted that his party's independent newspaper must be published in Lithuania because Gamsakhurdia controls all the machinery of publishing. Gamsakhurdia's dictatorship, he claimed, is preventing Georgia from becoming recognized. Chanturia then said that there are 76 political prisoners in Georgia, and that he had sent the list to the American Embassy in Moscow.

Chairman Hoyer, noting that Chanturia could demonstrate, speak out and that his party has a headquarters, asked if Chanturia felt threatened by arrest or armed attack. Chanturia replied that he and his supporters cannot put forth ideas publicly since all media were closed to them ten months ago. As for his party headquarters, said Chanturia, they are located in the former Komsomol building; neither the Communist Party nor Gamsakhurdia has officially recognized that building as the headquarters of the NDP.

The Meeting "In the Woods"

At around noon, delegation members, escorted by Chanturia and Irina Sarishvili of the National Democratic Party, and transported by buses provided by the Georgian authorities, traveled to Shavnabada (about 70 kilometers from Tbilisi) to meet with former Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua and former Foreign Minister Gyorgy Koshtaria. They were reportedly "hiding out" under the protection of the National Guard led by Tengiz Kitovani.

Surrounded by armed soldiers in uniform, the delegation trooped into an auditorium for a meeting with Sigua and Koshtaria, who flanked Kitovani. Sigua did most of talking; he explained that he had resigned his post to protest Gamsakhurdia's political and

economic policies. He said Gamsakhurdia had reneged on his promise to introduce democracy in Georgia and had instead moved towards a dictatorship by ignoring the constitution, appointing unqualified people to high positions, making unilateral executive decisions, censoring the media, and stifling opposition views and criticism of himself.

Sigua claimed further that Gamsakhurdia, the Georgian KGB and Communist Party had a secret agreement with the coup plotters in Moscow. As evidence, he made the following charges: two of Gamsakhurdia's ministers were in Moscow on August 18 to negotiate with Gennady Yanaev (former USSR Vice-President and one of the leading organizers of the August coup); all decrees issued by the State Emergency Committee were published in Georgia (as opposed to other independence-seeking republics) and moves were made to implement them; Gamsakhurdia ordered Georgia's National Guard to disband and transferred to the control of Georgia's Internal Troops. Sigua said this agreement was affirmed during an August 19 meeting in Tbilisi between Gamsakhurdia, USSR Deputy Defense Minister Shuravlev and General Patrikeev, Commander of the Transcaucasian Military District. The same evening, continued Sigua, General Patrikeev appeared on Georgian television and demanded that Tengiz Kitovani instruct his troops to lay down their arms; his initial deadline of four days was later shortened to one day.

Kitovani then took up the story; after refusing to disband the Guard and transfer its troops to the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, he led 13,000 men to Shavnabada (the former headquarters of a Communist Party youth camp). There they remained, in what Kitovani asserted--rather dubiously, it seemed to most delegation members--was a politically neutral position, siding neither with Gamsakhurdia nor the opposition. He maintained that his forces would not act against the Georgian people.

Koshtaria added that Gamsakhurdia had betrayed his election platform based on political pluralism, democracy and a free market system, and concurred with Sigua that Gamsakhurdia had dictatorial tendencies. He claimed that there was a list of some 25 people slated for arrest if the coup had succeeded, and that his name headed the list.

Sigua concluded that Gamsakhurdia, having betrayed the Georgian people, must resign. He said the opposition was determined to effect his removal through purely non-violent, constitutional means. The specific method he envisioned involved charging Gamsakhurdia with treason--the only way to impeach a president, which requires the cooperation of three-quarters of the Georgia's legislators who must vote to oust him. In any case, Sigua, Koshtaria and Kitovani told delegation members that they would not work with Gamsakhurdia any longer.

Meeting with Independent Journalists

After returning from Shavnabada, the delegation took part in a brief conversation arranged by the Georgian side with two independent reporters for *Moscow News* who had

complained of harassment, intimidation and deprival of access to official information for having written critically about Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Chairman Hoyer and Representatives Glickman, Sawyer and Skaggs spoke to them.

The two journalists claimed that since April 9, 1991, when Georgia declared independence, they had been refused permission to attend sessions of the Supreme Council, despite repeated requests to the Secretariat of the parliament. They also complained of physical intimidation and threats, including the beating of one of their children, as a consequence of having expressed their views about the government.

Departure

The mood of the delegation upon leaving Georgia was a combination of puzzlement and concern. Many aspects of the two-day stay, such as traveling on government-supplied buses to a supposedly conspiratorial meeting in the woods with former government ministers who accused the government of stifling human rights and Gamsakhurdia himself of treason, struck members as peculiar. The delegation was impressed by the opposition's complaints about Gamsakhurdia's rule, but observed that opposition activists were free to demonstrate and that the Georgian government had arranged and facilitated meetings for the delegation with individuals and groups that were sure to blast Gamsakhurdia and his government. The republic, in general, seemed embroiled in serious domestic turmoil, with few prospects of compromise between the government and the radical opposition, and unclear chances of cooperation between the government and the moderate opposition as the republic's political temperature went ever higher.

VISIT TO ARMENIA
September 8, 1991

I. OBJECTIVES

The visit to Armenia had four main goals: to meet with Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossyan and other government and parliamentary leaders for discussions on Armenia's future course in the aftermath of the failed coup; to learn about the domestic political balance of forces in Armenia on the eve of the September 21 referendum on independence and in advance of the October 16 direct presidential election; to get an update on the situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh [NKAO] and the Armenia's chances of coming to terms with Azerbaijan over the autonomous oblast; and, finally, to discuss Armenia's difficult economic situation, its plans for market reform and hopes of attracting foreign investment.

II. THE CONTEXT

Delegation members arrived for their brief stop in Yerevan at a time of transition to an uncertain future: facing the republic were a referendum on independence, a presidential election, and the need to continue economic reform and rebuilding after the earthquake. Other key considerations were the implications of the coup's failure and the August 29 declaration of independence by Azerbaijan on the fate of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, an autonomous oblast in Azerbaijan heavily populated by Armenians. Delegation members looked forward to a briefing on all these matters from Armenia's democratically elected leadership.

The strong sentiment for independence in virtually all republics, including Armenia, was greatly strengthened by the failure of the August coup. Considering that only Armenia has chosen the method of secession mandated by Soviet law, and the deteriorating situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh since April 1991, Chairman Hoyer decided that a visit to the republic by the delegation, however brief, was essential.

September 21 Referendum on Independence

Unlike the Baltic States and Georgia, Armenia has opted to act in accordance with Soviet law on secession. Armenia is the only Soviet republic attempting to leave the USSR "legally," from the perspective of the Kremlin. (Actually, the relevance of the Soviet law on secession is very much in question, in light of the failed coup, but Armenia's leadership proceeded on the assumption that Soviet law still has validity).

Armenia's population is almost entirely Armenian (which means basically no national minority problem), and pro-independence sentiment is strong, so the outcome of

the referendum was not seriously in doubt. But leaving the USSR is a ticklish prospect for Christian Armenia: surrounded by Moslem countries, with which it has historically had tense and occasionally very bloody relations, many Armenians have seen Russian/Soviet rule as a source of protection. Still, the coup's failure and the rush of independence declarations by republics heightened independence fever in Armenia: Ter-Petrossyan said before the delegation's arrival that before the coup, the pro-independence vote would have been 70 percent, but he now expected a 95 percent "Yes" vote.

The October 16 Presidential Election

Delegation members wanted to discuss the personalities and programs of the contenders in Armenia's first-ever direct presidential election on October 16, and their strategies for achieving Armenian independence. One question of interest to the delegation was whether the failure of the coup and the anticipated greater ease of leaving an unraveling USSR would lessen the differences among pro-independence candidates. The issues include:

o *tempo and method of leaving the USSR*: Ter-Petrossyan has been willing to abide by the 5-year waiting period in Gorbachev's law on secession; his opponents on the "right" argue for proceeding with independence on the republic's own authority with no externally imposed timetables. One adherent of this view is Paruir Airikian, a former political prisoner and longtime pro-independence Armenian nationalist expelled from the USSR in 1988. He was elected to parliament in absentia in May 1990 and returned to Armenia in November 1990.

o *Relations with Turkey*: Ter-Petrossyan has tried to normalize ties, for which some opponents on the right [though not Airikiyan] have bitterly criticized him.

o *Nagorno-Karabakh*: Ter-Petrossyan says this is a human rights issue of self-determination for the Armenians of NKAO; some of his opponents urge stronger--possibly even military--measures to regain NKAO.

The Situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh

Armenia and Azerbaijan have been locked in conflict over this autonomous oblast since 1988. But in late April 1991, joint operations against Armenian villages began by the Soviet army and Azerbaijani forces, which have resulted in large-scale deportations. Many Armenians believed the purpose of these assaults was to reward the pro-Union Treaty stance of Azerbaijan's communist leadership while punishing Armenia for refusing to join the Union.

A critical new factor in this equation is the approach of the post-coup Soviet leadership and Defense Ministry to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over NKAO--

especially since Azerbaijan's President Mutalibov initially backed the coup. If the "center" and Soviet army forces were not involved, there might be reason to hope for negotiations between the republics. Delegation members were especially interested in hearing Armenian views on NKAO in the changed political situation in the USSR.

Armenia's Economic Situation and the Legacy of the Earthquake

Armenia was one of the first republics to launch an ambitious privatization campaign. But its efforts at economic reform have been greatly hampered by Azerbaijan's rail-blockade, the need to deal with Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, the general disruption of the Soviet economy, and coping with the devastation of the December 1988 earthquake. Delegation members wanted to hear about Armenia's plans to continue economic reform and its need for western investment and assistance.

III. THE VISIT

Yerevan, Armenia
September 8, 1991

The delegation's brief stop in Yerevan was the first official visit by the Helsinki Commission to Armenia. A large group, headed by Armenian Vice-President Gagik Harutyunian, met the delegation at the airport. After a quick tour of Yerevan, the delegation met with Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossyan, who provided a wide-ranging overview of the situation in the "USSR" and Armenia's future.

Meeting with Armenian President Ter-Petrossyan

Armenia's leadership, Ter-Petrossyan explained, had concluded in the fall of 1990 that the Soviet Union as a unified empire was finished. The central authorities, allied with conservatives and hard-liners, had ceased to be a progressive force and power was increasingly shifting to the republics. Many in the West, however, refused to acknowledge this reality. In Ter-Petrossyan's view, the West's continuing, unqualified support for Gorbachev to some degree promoted the August coup. The West, he said, must now seek equal relations with all the republics, and any political and economic assistance proffered should be equally divided among them. Western powers must also stop viewing human rights violations by the Soviet army and attacks against civilians as an "internal affair" of the USSR.

Ter-Petrossyan saw the ideal outcome of the ongoing reorganization of the Soviet Union as an analogue to the European Community, but it would have to be conditioned on the political independence of the republics. All the republics, he expected, would follow the Baltic model and seek their full independence. The West, he advised, should

not fear this development but should support and encourage it. Ter-Petrossyan asked the delegation to help gain Western recognition for the republics in the United Nations.

As for Armenia, it was proceeding along the path towards independence begun in August 1990, when the newly-elected parliament passed a declaration on transition to independence. Armenia, explained Ter-Petrossyan, sees independence as its sole guarantee of national survival: the events of the last three years have demonstrated that the Soviet Union cannot guarantee Armenia's security. More reliable guarantees would be recognition of the republic as a subject of international law, so that any attack on Armenia could not be explained away as "an internal matter" of the USSR, and normal relations with neighboring states. To this end, Armenia has signed a treaty with Georgia, was optimistic about the prospects of normal ties with Iran, and is attempting to build a workable relationship with Turkey.

Chairman Hoyer assured President Ter-Petrossyan that the Helsinki Commission does not see human rights violations anywhere as an "internal affair" of any country. He added that the Commission has an interest in seeing Armenia become what it wants to become: free and independent. He asked for more details on Armenia's path to independence.

Ter-Petrossyan explained that before the August coup, Armenia had been thinking in terms of a 5-year transition period to independence. That timetable was being rethought after last month's events, but he did not anticipate any major differences. In any case, he continued, Armenian independence would gain international recognition only when it had a solid legal basis, which the September 21 referendum was intended to provide. For Armenia--unlike the Baltic States--the only legal grounds for independence could be self-determination on the basis of the Soviet constitution and law. Ter-Petrossyan envisioned that Armenia would not be a full member of whatever entity emerges out of the USSR, but had not yet reached a decision on associate or observer status.

Representative Gilman asked about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and prospects for resolution of the dispute with Azerbaijan. Ter-Petrossyan replied that political negotiations on the autonomous region were the only possible means of addressing the problem, but the attempt that had been made, with the participation of Mikhail Gorbachev, had foundered because Gorbachev was not a neutral arbitrator; Azerbaijan intended to remain in the Union, while Armenia had made clear its intention of leaving, which induced the center to collaborate with Azerbaijan in deporting Armenians from the region. Truly neutral arbitrators were needed. Ter-Petrossyan said he had told Gorbachev, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev that they should act as guarantors for multi-lateral negotiations once organs of local government had been reinstated in Nagorno-Karabakh. He voiced confidence that such talks would soon begin.

Representative Myers then delivered to President Ter-Petrossyan a letter from Kansas Senator Robert Dole, conveying his invitation to visit the United States and his assurances of a warm welcome in the Senate and the Department of State.

Meeting with the Opposition

The delegation then held a meeting with representatives of various Armenian political parties, including the Constitutional Rights Union, the Christian Democratic Union, the Revolutionary Dashnak Federation and the Union for National Self-Determination. While espousing different goals, they generally agreed that the current parliament had been elected under conditions of communist rule and they called for new elections. They also criticized the current government for less than democratic methods and for a willingness to wait and abide by Soviet law before declaring Armenian independence.

The opposition spokesmen also charged that Ter-Petrossyan's rivals in the upcoming October 16 presidential election did not enjoy equal access to the media. Presidential candidate Paruir Airikian asked the Commission to send observers to the election, and Chairman Hoyer agreed to do so.

At the state dinner hosted by President Ter-Petrossyan in honor of the delegation, he thanked the U.S. Congress and government, as well as the American people, for material and moral assistance after Armenia's December 1988 earthquake. He also expressed gratitude for American condemnations of human rights violations in Nagorno-Karabakh and voiced confidence that Armenia could count on U.S. support in becoming a free and prosperous country.

The delegation left from the state dinner directly for the airport for the flight to Moscow.

VISIT TO MOSCOW
September 9-10, 1991

I. OBJECTIVES

The delegation's visit to Moscow had four main goals: to meet with the leadership of the "USSR" and the Russian Republic for discussions on the future of the country--or countries--to emerge from the breakup of the Soviet Union; to consult with Russian Republic lawmakers on human rights issues, economic and legal reform, and parliamentary structures; to emphasize continued U.S. concern for traditional human rights issues, including the status of longterm refuseniks; and to attend the opening of the third meeting of the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension (CDH), which began on September 10.

II. CONTEXT

After a sweep of the Baltic States and two outlying Caucasian republics determinedly seeking independence, the delegation arrived in Moscow at a moment when the city was wondering about its new identity: still rejoicing after the defeat of the coup, its inhabitants and the world community were still waiting to find out whether Moscow would be the capital of any entity larger than the Russian Republic.

The Shape of Things to Come

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian President Yeltsin are grappling with the same question, even though they have different views and preferences. Russia soon after the collapse of the coup signed agreements with Ukraine and Kazakhstan which made no mention of the "center," and invited other republics to join in an economic union. Gorbachev favors such a union, but he has no republic base of support and would certainly want to retain at least some all-Union structures, perhaps in a coordinating role. Consequently, delegation members hoped to discuss with Soviet leaders their vision of the future, including security arrangements in a totally changed world and the role of the United States in fostering economic reforms in ... the "USSR?" Russia and other individual republics? an economic union?

Delegation members did not have the chance to consult with all-Union legislators, as the extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies called to recast government and parliamentary structures was no longer in session and the Supreme Soviet had been adjourned earlier. In any case, whether there will, in fact, be an all-Union legislature remains an open question; even less clear is what powers it would have. The future of the Russian parliament is much more secure, however, and meetings with Russian legislators allowed delegation members to discuss the future of U.S. political-economic relations with

Russia, the republic's new constitution (nearing completion), and other issues of mutual interest and concern.

III. THE VISIT

Moscow
September 9, 1991

The delegation's first official activity in Moscow was an embassy briefing by Deputy Chief of Mission James Collins the morning of September 9. He described the situation that had developed in the wake of the failed coup attempt and answered members' questions on future developments, assistance needs and U.S. policy options.

Meeting with Fyodor Burlatsky

Chairman Hoyer and Co-Chairman DeConcini then had a private meeting with Fyodor Burlatsky, who had chaired the Sub-Committee on Humanitarian, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the USSR Supreme Soviet. The Commission had established a relationship with Burlatsky's Sub-Committee within the framework of a parliamentary exchange program with the Supreme Soviet, and the trip to the USSR was originally envisioned as a twice-postponed return visit by the Commission after Burlatsky led a delegation of Soviet legislators to the United States in November 1989. The August coup, however, changed those plans and the future of the relationship between the Commission and the USSR Supreme Soviet is unclear.

Burlatsky described to the Chairman and Co-Chairman the new parliamentary structures that had been voted upon by the Congress of People's Deputies, as well as the new Soviet government and the economic union among the republics. He said he was concerned not about the disintegration of the Soviet empire but about the threatened loss of democracy and freedom and the reduced role of parliamentary institutions. Burlatsky saw the hope of democracy in individuals like (former Soviet Foreign Minister) Eduard Shevardnadze, (St. Petersburg Mayor) Anatoly Sobchak, Alexander Yakovlev and other democrats. The main danger he saw came from extremists on both the right and the left, who, he said, had united to some degree against reformers.

Meeting with Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovsky

At noon, the delegation met with Vladimir Petrovsky, Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister. Welcoming the delegation, Petrovsky said the USSR had now abandoned its traditional policy of non-interference in internal affairs in matters of human rights and democracy, a statement warmly greeted by Chairman Hoyer, Co-Chairman DeConcini and other delegation members. The human rights of citizens in any country, stated Petrovsky, are the legitimate concern of all other countries. He promised to see to the resolution of

several outstanding cases, hopefully by the end of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension (CDH). He said he was looking forward to the Meeting, of which he was the Executive Secretary, and that the Soviet side was trying its best to cooperate with the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved. He also admitted that organizing the Meeting -- and actually being able to open it on time -- had not been easy in the wake of the failed coup.

Answering questions from delegation members, Petrovsky said that the Soviet Foreign Ministry would change to take into account the policies and preferences of the republics, with the Ministry playing a coordinating role and negotiating issues of all-union importance, such as security, defense, disarmament and some economic and trade relations. He expressed the hope for U.S. cooperation in establishing a free market system in the Soviet Union through investment and economic assistance. Petrovsky offered assurances that obstacles to investment would soon be removed. Meanwhile, the shortage of medical supplies was critical and any help from the United States would be most welcome. He promised to provide a list of the items most urgently needed.

Delegation members asked about the May 1991 emigration law and noted some of its shortcomings. Petrovsky explained that there is still serious internal resistance in the USSR to the notion of free emigration. He added that one important factor for the Soviet side is the fear that Soviet migrant workers in other countries would be treated like second-class citizens, an eventuality that might be averted through CSCE mechanisms.

Meeting with Russian Parliamentarians

The delegation's next meeting was in the Russian Republic's parliament building (the "White House," as it is called in Russia), where Russian President Boris Yeltsin had defied the coup plotters several weeks earlier and rallied Muscovites to resist the putsch. The delegation met with two Russian parliamentarians: one was Sergey Kovalyov, former political prisoner and longtime associate of Dr. Andrei Sakharov. Reflecting the dramatic changes that have taken place in the USSR over the last few years, Kovalyov is today the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Russian Supreme Soviet. The other legislator present was Vladimir Lukin, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Chairman Hoyer gave Kovalyov a list of prisoners of conscience and refuseniks, calling particular attention to the cases of Alexander Smolyar and Vasily Barats. Kovalyov explained that human rights activists abroad and in Russia--himself included--were still working under trying conditions, as a blacklist of names remained and some individuals still encountered difficulties entering the country. He agreed with delegation members that the emigration law had shortcomings, adding that he is more worried about freedom of movement *within* the country and about prison conditions throughout the country. On extreme right-wing groups, Kovalyov said they have little influence at present but that they could become more powerful in times of economic hardship.

Lukin told delegation members that Russia wants to establish its own relations with foreign countries. Asked about ties between Russia and the other republics, he said Russia could not interfere in their affairs but that it was important to emphasize human rights issues in such relations. Lukin voiced the concern that republic leaders would use the old Soviet refrain of "non-interference in internal affairs" to deflect inquiries about possible human rights abuses. He added there were instances where the removal of Soviet troops from a region would only greatly exacerbate tensions between and within republics.

The Russian parliamentarians urged the Helsinki Commission and the U.S. Congress to press other republics on human rights concerns, saying that it was "easier" for American legislators to exert such influence on the non-Russian republics than for Russian parliamentarians, given the history of Russia's relations with those republics. Lukin stated that all the Soviet republics are already CSCE signatory states, as the USSR had signed adherence to CSCE provisions on their behalf as well, so CSCE commitments presumably are binding on them. At the conclusion of his remarks, in a very moving statement, Kovalyov expressed gratitude for the many years of support that he and his fellow political prisoners had received from Americans and the U.S. Congress. "You can feel the pain of others," said Kovalyov. "We were defending our friends. You stood up for people you didn't even know."

The delegation was next scheduled to meet with Oleg Rumyantsev, head of Russia's Social-Democratic Party and Chairman of the Russian Republic's Constitutional Commission. Rumyantsev was called away on urgent business, however, and his assistant Andrey Goltsblatt met briefly with the members. He supplied a quick update on the status of the new Russian constitution, explaining that the drafting was basically finished and that a referendum on the document would be held by the end of 1991.

The delegation then went to the Slavyanskaya Hotel, where the press center for the CSCE Moscow Meeting was located, for a press conference. Chairman Hoyer and Co-Chairman DeConcini made statements and all the members then answered questions. They emphasized their concern about the state of affairs in Georgia, and stressed that all republics must observe human rights commitments and democratic norms. At the end of the press conference, Representative Slaughter presented a flag to Oleg Ochin, the Mayor of Novgorod, which is a sister-city of Rochester, New York.

Reception at Armenian Permanent Representation/JFK Photo Exhibit

In the wake of their visit to Armenia, members attended a reception at the Armenian Permanent Representation to Moscow hosted by the Permanent Representative and the Armenian Assembly. En route to that reception, Chairman Hoyer and others visited the JFK Photo Exhibit sponsored by the Democratic Leadership Council, where they met and spoke briefly with Eduard Shevardnadze.

Meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev

The delegation's evening meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev took place in his new office, in the former headquarters of the CPSU Central Committee; the office itself formerly belonged to Gennady Yanaev.

Informed by Chairman Hoyer that Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovsky had said the USSR had now abandoned its policy of "non-interference in internal affairs" in response to inquiries about human rights abuses, Kozyrev expressed happy surprise. He said that Russian officials had pressed him about this very point only several days before, adding that it remained to be seen how consistently the new policy would be implemented.

Kozyrev asked delegation members about their impressions of Georgia. Chairman Hoyer said that while Georgia's government and opposition stated their commitment to democracy, he had been struck by Gamsakhurdia's insistence on the need for order and he feared that the attempt to establish order was resulting in the reverse. In short, the delegation felt that the situation in Georgia was much less stable than in the Baltic States and Armenia.

Kozyrev said that Russia has been considering for the republics of the former Soviet Union a form of CSCE that would embrace issues covered in the three Helsinki baskets. This would create an inter-republic forum for consultations and inquiries about human rights problems, as well as security matters and economic concerns.

Kozyrev said the country was tending toward disintegration and expressed doubts about an eventual Union Treaty; he did not, in any case, expect that Ukraine would sign it. He said republics, in principle, need not join the union, but that at least transitional mechanisms were needed to avert disorder and chaos and to protect minorities. Kozyrev suggested that concerns among other republics about the role of Russia as the practical successor to the Soviet Union might be discussed at a conference in some city other than Moscow.

Chairman Hoyer noted that a partnership between Russia and the United States would bring great benefits to the international community, as, for example, in the Middle East. Kozyrev ended the meeting by saying that after the coup, Russia knows who its true friends are.

Meeting with Ambassador Kampelman

Delegation members began the last day of the trip, September 10, with a breakfast meeting with Ambassador Max Kampelman, the head of the U.S. Delegation to the Moscow Meeting of the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension, scheduled to begin that morning. Ambassador Kampelman reviewed the main issues facing the conference.

As the Baltic States were to be admitted as full members later that morning, he noted the need for consistent admission procedures for new members, since future admissions were unpredictable. Still, Kampelman felt it was unlikely that CSCE membership would increase too dramatically, because the concept of "Europe" as extending from the Atlantic to the Urals allowed only five more states to enter.

Kampelman told members that his two goals for the meeting were: to develop a CSCE procedure to deal with ethnic problems through mediation; to reinforce the need for each Soviet republic to maintain CSCE standards, perhaps through the establishment of local CSCE offices.

Meeting with Soviet Defense Minister Shaposhnikov

The delegation then went to the USSR Ministry of Defense for a meeting with newly appointed Defense Minister Evgeny Shaposhnikov. Chairman Hoyer opened with a question about the security and disposition of Soviet nuclear weapons now that the "USSR" appeared to be breaking up. Shaposhnikov replied that the weapons had been well guarded during the coup attempt, and that their security was the subject of daily inquiries by President Gorbachev. He said that all republics had agreed that the center would retain control over nuclear weapons. Shaposhnikov added that the armed forces must remain united, irrespective of whether the "USSR" becomes a federation, confederation or association.

In response to Co-Chairman DeConcini's question about the timetable for withdrawal of Soviet forces from the Baltic States, Shaposhnikov referred to the withdrawal of troops from East-Central Europe. He said that with 185,000 troops currently without housing, any withdrawal from the Baltic States before 1994 was infeasible. He added that the Baltic States would want to retain Soviet forces, as they lack military structures such as air defense and naval forces. Civil defense and recruiting stations, however, could be transferred to Baltic control.

Representative Glickman asked how a national defense policy could be established, given the independent foreign policies of the republics. Shaposhnikov suggested the differences would not be that great; he envisioned that the Defense Ministry would be a civilian agency, composed of committees on such subjects as military policy, economics, procurement, science and social-legal matters. Centrally-controlled forces would guard republic borders and do emergency relief and ecological work. Republics could handle the "economic aspects of troops stationed on their territory" through Defense Committees rather than ministries.

Shaposhnikov said the Soviet Union would implement all its arms control obligations. He said areas for future arms control endeavors included: reducing strategic

forces and tactical nuclear weapons; controls on precision weaponry; and lower conventional force levels.

In reply to Chairman Hoyer's question about military-to-civilian conversion programs, Shaposhnikov said that most enterprises involved in defense conversion should be returned to the civilian economy. Military orders might then make up ten percent of their output, but they would primarily be engaged in civilian production.

Shaposhnikov suggested a frank exchange of information between the United States and the USSR on global arms transfers. He discounted the possibility of actual limits on such transfers, however, as the global demand for weapons is too high. Shaposhnikov asked the delegation for information about U.S. agreements with foreign countries where U.S. forces are stationed. He said that similar arrangements might be introduced in the Soviet Union, where Soviet troops could be stationed in the republics. Shaposhnikov also requested information on U.S. laws and regulations regarding civilian control of the military, and on U.S. safeguards to prevent the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.

Moscow Meeting of the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension

The delegation then left for the Hall of Unions, the site of the Meeting, where there were many familiar faces. Chairman Hoyer and other members greeted Patriarch Alexei of the Russian Orthodox Church, who, as Metropolitan, had been a member of an inter-parliamentary delegation invited to the United States by the Helsinki Commission in November 1989. Chairman Hoyer also spoke with longtime human rights activist Elena Bonner, the widow of Andrei Sakharov, and with Yuri Orlov, one of the original founding members of the Moscow Helsinki Group.

The first address at the opening plenary session was by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. In his remarks, he thanked governments that had expressed outrage at the August coup attempt for their support at a difficult moment. Gorbachev also said that the defeat of the coup showed that the political reform undertaken since 1985 in his country was irreversible and that he looked forward to the completion of the process of democratization, for which he hoped that CSCE countries would continue to show support. He also welcomed the fundamental changes in the relations between the former Soviet "center" and the newly independent republics.

The next highlight of the session was the formal admission of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to full membership in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. As the result of a decision taken by an extraordinary meeting of the CSCE Council of Ministers earlier that morning, and the obtaining of consensus to that decision at the plenary, the representatives of these newly independent countries took their seats at the

conference table, thus re-entering the international community of states from which they were snatched in 1940.

On the Soviet side, the failure of the August coup led to one very important political and symbolic change in the composition of the Soviet delegation to the Moscow Meeting: Sergey Kovalyov, former dissident, political prisoner and associate of Dr. Andrei Sakharov, and currently the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Russian Supreme Soviet, was named co-chairman of the Soviet delegation. (The other Co-Chairman was Yuri Deryabin, a Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR). Sitting at the conference table, Kovalyov offered graphic evidence of how far human rights and its advocates have come in the "USSR," and a clear signal that the Russian Republic is likely to insist on a shared role with the Soviet "center" -- if it survives -- in policymaking on such issues in the future.

APPENDIX A

Remarks before the Plenary Session of the
Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures
by STENY H. HOYER
Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Vienna, Austria *September 4, 1991*

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to once again have the opportunity to talk to a forum of the CSCE. It seems that in the past few years, each time that I do, the world is a different place than when I spoke last. This is dramatically true today.

Four and a half decades ago, Winston Churchill declared in Fulton, Missouri, in the heartland of the United States, that "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the continent."

We have seen that wall come down.

We have seen the people of the Soviet Union in recent weeks look down the muzzles of tanks and say "Nyet" to efforts to re-establish repression through fear, brutality and intimidation. And freedom won. The pulse of democracy and human rights is strong in the body politic of the republics we have known as the Soviet Union.

The pace of current events in Europe makes delivering a prepared speech with any definitive assessments foolhardy, if not impossible. I would be remiss if I did not open with words of congratulation for the Baltic States, whose independence has finally been recognized by my country and others around this table, after fifty years of occupation. On this historic occasion, we see the passing of one of the final barriers which, for so long, divided this continent. The process of democratization in the Soviet Union has been most responsible for this event.

There can be no question that a challenging road remains ahead for these three countries. For that very reason, I and my colleagues at the Helsinki Commission and the United States Congress would urge the countries of the CSCE to take prompt action in support of the Baltic States, in particular, by moving quickly to make Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania full members of the CSCE. We have proclaimed this to be our goal for so long that we must not hesitate now.

Baltic freedom is yet another example of a goal, achieved with the help of the CSCE process, that was deemed unrealistic by many. History has shown that the CSCE must not be afraid of "unrealistic" goals. I would recall a point that I made three years ago, when I addressed a plenary meeting here as we struggled with the question of two CSCE security forums and a human rights meeting in Moscow. In 1982, U.S. President Ronald Reagan suggested a "zero option" for arms control and was labelled at best naive and at worst cynically manipulative. Five years later, he and President Gorbachev signed a treaty eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons. Eight years later, your fellow negotiators here in the Hofburg wrote into a treaty cuts in conventional forces which, although not a "zero option," would have been regarded as equally naive or dangerous had they been proposed in 1982.

At the follow-up meeting in 1988, I asked why human rights advocates should settle for any less. We in the United States and on the Helsinki Commission seek a "zero option" for human rights: zero political prisoners; zero divided families; zero refusals of requests to emigrate or return; zero broadcasts jammed; zero restraints on religious observance and teaching; zero curbs on free communication, assembly, and association.

I think we could all agree that we are closer to that goal than we could have imagined in November 1988. Recent events have shown, however, both the vulnerability of those gains to repression and the strength of popular support for those gains -- a strength bolstered by the knowledge that states will be held accountable for their commitments under the Helsinki process. Adherence to Helsinki principles, to the commitments of the Copenhagen Document and the Paris Charter, is essential not only for the well-being and security of individuals, but for that of states as well.

The crises we face in Europe must make us more aware than ever that security is indivisible. The wisdom of the architects of Helsinki, some of whom are with us today, in insisting that the three baskets of Helsinki be linked is evident. Today we often hear that this idea is outdated, old thinking, a Cold War leftover. Nothing could be more wrong. While we have had significant success in cutting back the military means of conflict, the ethnic, national and political sources of conflict threaten to overwhelm us. In this light, the potential of the Conflict Prevention Center takes on a greater relevance. In tandem with the efforts in the human dimension -- through the linkage the Helsinki process wisely provides -- the military side of the CSCE can enhance security, in the broadest sense of the term, for all our people.

As you begin informal discussions and consultations on a new forum for security issues, bringing in all the participating States, you have a string of successes on which to build. The flexibility of the CSCE process has already allowed the security basket to adapt to the momentous changes in Europe of the past two years. From the original CBMs of Helsinki and Madrid and the ground-breaking inspection provisions of Stockholm, security in the CSCE has grown to encompass the exchange of volumes of information, budgets,

and plans; visits to evaluate the accuracy of that information; a mechanism for states to discuss their security concerns relating to the unusual military activities of other participating States; and even an annual review of implementation -- something the Conference on the Human Dimension has successfully employed.

These interlocking measures are the beginnings of a true "security system": not an artificial entity, but a practical system of measures that work, that enhance the security of all participating states in practical ways. The Conflict Prevention Center, whose Consultative Committee you form, is a visible sign of the potential for cooperation strong enough to withstand efforts to divide or tyrannize any part of Europe. The goal of enhancing security in its broadest sense should be kept in mind as you work at the development of this modest institution, which does not yet live up to its name. We should be inspired by the success of the much-maligned United Nations in responding collectively to the naked aggression perpetrated by Saddam Hussein against Kuwait.

As we explore potential tasks for the security basket, I would recall one Secretary Baker highlighted in Berlin -- arms transfers and proliferation. The United States has a strong interest in pursuing stricter control of arms transfers in a multilateral framework. The United States Congress has called for a U.S. policy combining unilateral restraint and multilateral diplomacy to slow destabilizing flows of arms. My country is not the only one to recognize the special responsibility of CSCE states -- nine of the world's top ten arms dealers, with cutting-edge technology at their disposal -- sit around this table. I am aware that my country sells one of the greatest quantities of arms. Several of the countries around this table have joined the United States in calling for work on arms transfers within the CSCE; our Polish colleagues have tabled an interesting proposal here.

Information, which the CSBMs use to increase transparency and decrease anxiety about our military forces, is an excellent way to better understand and cope with the profusion of weapons transfers as well. The Gulf War demonstrated the need to monitor the potential for mass destruction we create.

The recent acceleration of change in the Soviet Union must make us look forward, as well, to the possibility of greater progress in conventional arms control as well. The CSBM forum cannot but be heartened to hear so many of the newly-sovereign republics renounce the use of nuclear weapons and offensive militaries. These developments may concern us, and challenge our traditional concept of the military balance and negotiations among states. But they also present an unprecedented opportunity for cooperation at many levels, an opportunity that should be used to enhance openness and transparency on weapons deployment, both conventional and nuclear.

The complex of military and political changes which have brought us to this point proves that conflicts or potential conflicts in Europe -- although their military dimension may be the most frightening or the most potentially destabilizing -- cannot be solved

through military measures alone. The CSCE continues to add tools to address all the facets of conflict in Europe. With the Senior Officials meeting on the continuing tragic violence in Yugoslavia in process, our countries must take concrete steps -- such as the convening of an international conference leading to a CSCE-guaranteed cease-fire -- aimed at the root of the conflict.

The Conference on the Human Dimension, of which the postponed Moscow meeting is an integral part, addresses another element of conflict -- the crucial connection between respect for human rights and a secure, peaceful society. Particularly topical are the ramifications of non-observance of human dimension commitments regarding self-determination, the rule of law, and civilian control of the military. In the wake of the recent coup attempt in the Soviet Union, the linkage between observance of military commitments and implementation of the human dimension commitments has never been more clear. Given the human condition, we will never eliminate threats to the security of the region. But, minimizing risks to international security is our objective and our obligation. I wish you well as you pursue this critical work.

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